Research Compilation: The Commercialization of Astrology and Consumer Grievances

1. Introduction: The Boom of Digital Astrology

The astrology market in India has experienced exponential growth, transitioning from traditional face-to-face consultations to a massive digital industry. According to RedSeer Strategy Consultants, the Indian astrology market is currently valued at over ₹60,000 crore and is projected to grow tenfold in the digital segment by 2030. While this growth has democratized access to astrological guidance, it has also paved the way for widespread commercialization, exploitation, and fraudulent practices.

2. Industry-Wide Issues: Fake Reviews and Deceptive Marketing

As the industry grows, so do the deceptive tactics used to acquire and retain customers.

- **Fake Reviews and Follower Manipulation:** Investigations into major platforms have revealed that some apps exploit user trust through manipulative marketing. Reports indicate that platforms and individual practitioners often buy fake followers and fabricate positive reviews to bury negative feedback and create an illusion of credibility and expertise.
- **Cycle of Dependence:** These platforms often provide vague, generalized predictions (e.g., "positive changes are coming") to keep users hooked. By offering free initial consultations, they build trust before demanding exorbitant fees for subsequent readings or "remedial" rituals.

3. Social Media Fraud and Financial Exploitation

The rise of "Instagram astrologers" has led to severe financial fraud. Cybercriminals pose as certified astrologers, targeting vulnerable individuals seeking solutions for marriage, career, or personal struggles.

- **Case Studies in Fraud:** Recent police reports highlight significant financial losses. In Bengaluru, a 24-year-old woman was scammed out of ₹6 lakh by an Instagram astrologer who promised to fix her horoscope for a love marriage. Similarly, a woman in Mumbai lost ₹2.11 lakh over seven months to a fake astrologer who demanded money for religious rituals to guarantee solutions.

4. Case Study: Allegations Against Lunar Astro

A specific focus on "Lunar Astro" (founded by Deepanshu Giri) reveals a pattern of consumer grievances that mirror broader industry issues. Based on publicly available reviews from platforms like Trustpilot, MouthShut, and ConsumerComplaints.in, several recurring allegations emerge:

A. Exorbitant Pricing and Unprofessional Service

Consumers frequently report a severe mismatch between the fees charged and the quality of service.

- Users report paying up to ₹8,000 for 15-to-30-minute consultations.
- Complaints allege that consultations are often conducted by "faceless, nameless" junior or amateur astrologers (referred to by codes like "5007" or "5009") who lack experience, provide vague answers, and display unprofessional behavior (e.g., joining late without apologies).

B. Psychological Manipulation and Fear-Mongering

Several reviews highlight the use of fear-based tactics.

- Astrologers allegedly focus heavily on negative interpretations and disturbing "past life" stories. Consumers report feeling psychologically disturbed after

consultations, suggesting that these tactics may be used to induce fear and potentially upsell expensive remedies.

C. Questionable Business Practices and Customer Service

- **Data and Transparency:** Users have complained about the platform's refusal to provide PDF copies of their own astrological charts after expensive consultations, raising concerns about data transparency.
- **Allegations of Unethical Conduct:** Public complaints on consumer forums allege that the platform's leadership has stolen techniques from other astrologers, used proxy students to conduct readings, and orchestrated campaigns to defame competitors.

5. Conclusion

The digital astrology industry's rapid expansion has outpaced regulatory oversight. The prevalence of fake reviews, fear-mongering, and exorbitant pricing models highlights a business structure that often prioritizes profit over genuine spiritual or psychological guidance.

Appendix: Compiled Raw Negative Reviews

Review 1 (MouthShut - Rachit282)

Rating: Negative **Content:** "I took consultation from Lunar Astro... They charge 8000 rs for 15 mins consultation and the astrologer was in a hurry to disconnect the call. The predictions were completely wrong and when I tried to contact their support team, they blocked my number. It is a complete scam running in the name of astrology."

Review 2 (MouthShut - Code 5007)

Rating: 3 Stars (Text indicates highly negative experience) **Content:** "I just took a consultation from lunar Astro from astrologer code 5007- the worst ever consultation I ever had... The amount that was charged for a 30 min consultation is

enormous in contrast with the service I got, it was not really helpful... I would refrain from consulting lunar Astro again."

Review 3 (MouthShut - silajit428)

Rating: 1 Star **Content:** "Lunar astro is a big scam. They are looting people in the name of astrology. I paid 8000 for a consultation and the astrologer was very rude and arrogant. He didn't even listen to my problems and started predicting things which were completely irrelevant."

Review 4 (MouthShut - mitjoshir)

Rating: 1 Star **Content:** "Fake astrologers and fake predictions. I consulted them for my career and they told me I will get a job in 2 months. It's been 6 months and nothing happened. When I asked for a refund, they stopped replying to my emails."

Review 5 (MouthShut - ludhiyani1996)

Rating: 1 Star **Content:** "Very bad experience with Lunar Astro. The astrologer was not knowledgeable at all. He was just guessing things and when I cross-questioned him, he got angry. Waste of money and time."

Review 6 (MouthShut - coolchick90s)

Rating: 1 Star **Content:** "I took a consultation in Feb 2024 and the astrologer predicted a job change for me before 30 Apr 2024. However, i was laid off... I reached out to their greivance team for a proper reading but received no response... The consultation is provided by very amateur astrologers who are learning at our expense."

Review 7 (Trustpilot - Anonymous)

Rating: 1 Star **Content:** "I would have given Rs. 3k for such a reading, 8k felt like a fraud! ... The Moon Ketu of Deepanshu is seen in all these faceless, nameless astrologers u consult with... I hope to never have to go back to Lunar Astro Consultation, so discouraging, inaccurate, inexperienced & unprofessional."

Review 8 (MouthShut - qstrulospmp)

Rating: Negative **Content:** "Mostly I felt everything in my chart he interpreted was negative... Especially his story regarding my previous life actually disturbed my mind afterwards for a while. The customer service at LA refused to provide me with my own chart and horoscope in pdf form... I expected them to do better than just a normal interpretation."

Review 9 (ConsumerComplaints.in)

Subject: Lunar Astro - Deepanshu Giri Fraud **Content:** "Deepanshu giri is cheater | fake astrologer deepanshu giri... You first did course on bcp, than used their platform to promote urself... I have your own old customer reviews who brutly blaming you for wrong predictions and remedies... Deepanshu giri promoting him as his best students but secretly they have hidden plan for defaming other teachers and astrologer."